The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

JANUARY 1949

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OF RELIGION

I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church
By JOHN SUTHERLAND BONNELL

The Vista of the Years
By REV. ORVIS F. JORDAN

"Landmarks of the Way to God"
By MERRILL R. ABBEY

God's Plan for Your Life
By FREDERICK ANDREW ROBLEE

The Joy That Is Set Before You
By EUGENE L. SMITH

The Qualities of a Good Hymn
By MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

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Charles Clayton Morrison, *Editor*

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In the February Pulpit

For this issue of Brotherhood month The Pulpit is honored to publish a sermon by Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin of Wilshire Boulevard Temple (Congregation B'nai B'rith) in Los Angeles, California. Based on the text, Genesis 41:4, this message consists of a unique interpretation of the meaning of Pharoah's dream as applied to our time.

Another fine sermon which is appropriate to the month is one by William Clyde Howard of Second Presbyterian Church, Chicago. It is based on the text, Matthew 5:44, and is titled "How to Love Your Enemies."

A discussion of Ephesians 6 comes from the desk of Albert Joseph McCartney, director of the unique Chicago Sunday Evening Club. Bearing the title, "The Whole Panoply of God," this sermon is well worth the attention of Pulpit readers.

Of great interest will be a sermon by D. Allen Easton, Church of Scotland pastor of the Union Church, Peiping. This message was preached to a congregation of missionaries, English speaking Chinese, diplomats and military personnel just after the Peiping consulate suggested that all non-essential personnel be evacuated.

The exceptional article by Edwin E. Aubrey, president of Crozer Theological Seminary, which was promised for this month was held up due to "technical difficulties." It will be ready for you in the February Pulpit. Be sure to look for it!

WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE

Rev. John Sutherland Bonnell is minister of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City. He is also known as a lecturer at Princeton Theological Seminary and as a radio broadcaster. His program, "Our Spiritual Life," is carried over WJZ and the Blue network.

Rev. Orvis F. Jordan has been minister of the Community Church of Park Ridge, Ill., a suburb of Chicago. He was formerly pastor of First Christian Church, Evanston, Ill. Dr. Jordan is one of the outstanding pioneers in the community church movement.

Rev. Merrill R. Abbey is minister of the First-University Methodist Church in Madison, Wisconsin. Prior to his going to Madison, he was pastor of First Methodist Church, Milwaukee.

Rev. Eugene L. Smith is minister of St. Mark's Methodist Church, Brooklyn, New York. He is a graduate of Willamette University, Drew Theological Seminary, and New York University. From the latter intsitution he was granted the Ph.D. degree. Dr. Smith is lecturer at New York University in the field of counseling. He is the author of "The Power Within Us."

Rev. Frederick A. Roblee is minister of First Presbyterian Church, Bay City, Michigan. After graduating from McCormick Seminary in 1932, he went to Union Theological Seminary as graduate fellow. His only other pastorate was with Peters Memorial Church, St. Louis, Mo.

Chaplain (Major) Martin H. Scharlemann is a Lutheran pastor. He received his Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis. A chaplain in the army since 1941, he is at present an instructor at the Army Chaplain School, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

ORGANIZED in October 1908, the Federal Council of Churches celebrated its 40th anniversary at its biennial meeting in Cincinnati, December 1-3. The years have been marked by a steady growth in the actual work of this cooperative body of non-Roman Catholic Christianity, in the heartiness of its support by its 24 constituent denominations, and in the public recognition of its voice as the united voice of Protestantism whose churches participating in the council represent a membership of 27,000,000. There were, of course, many able addresses at Cincinnati. Most outstanding, in my judgement, were those of Dr. Cavert, executive secretary, and Dr. George W. Richard of Lancaster, Pa., who was one of the participants in the founding session in 1908. That was the year and the very month in which I became editor of the *Christian Century,* and I recall vividly the warmth of heart with which I reacted to the event. One of the chief matters of interest at Cincinnati was the encouraging report of progress toward the broadening of the base of interchurch cooperation by the merger of eight now separate agencies, including the Federal Council, in a "National Council of Churches of Christ." Sixteen denominations, representing 25,000,000 members, have approved the Federal Council's participation in the merger. No doubt the other denominations will approve. Favorable action has been taken by the International Council of Religious Education, the Home Missions Council and three other agencies. Only the Foreign Missions Conference and the United Council of Church Women have not yet acted. It is, however, unthinkable that either of them will wish to operate outside of a cooperative agency set up by the churches and democratically representative of them.

The Federal Council Biennial Meeting

The Book of the Month

THE LORD'S SUPPER: SEVEN MEANINGS. *by Harold E. Fey. Harper,* $1.50.

THIS book is a beautiful interweaving of explanation and meditation. It is a manual of both instruction and spiritual refreshment. Dr. Fey has made available to layman and minister all the interpretations of the Lord's Supper which have found a place in the history of the Christian church. These he has set before us in a spirit of objective understanding, touched, however, with frank but sympathetic criticism. His purpose, plainly, is to clarify Protestant minds as to the plenitude of meaning which even ancient and still persisting differences of conception have contributed to this supreme act of Christian worship. The devotional reflections will help the devout Christian to prepare his mind to receive the communion and will also kindle the mind of the celebrant with insights for its most reverent and helpful observance. No minister will boast that he is without need of such kindling help as this book affords. The seven meanings are: a memorial, a thanksgiving, a new covenant, a fellowship with Christ, an affirmation, a reconciliation (atonement), and immortality. In only one chapter does Dr. Fey become controversial. This is in his treatment of transubstantiation, which is little short of seathing, but it leaves one grateful for such plain speaking.

A Thought for the Month

HUMAN life is thick with perils, and the good life offers no escape from them. Indeed, the good life is beset with special dangers that arise from goodness itself. Horace Bushnell has left in one of his greatest sermons the thesis that every virtue subtly tends to pass over into its opposite. The line between the virtue and its perversion is all too easily crossed. Our noblest vocations have their own peculiar perils. The minister's peril is professionalism—an overdeveloped consciousness of his technique at the expense of spontaneity and simple earnestness. This may appear in the preparation and delivery of his sermons, in the manner of his dealing with people, and in the spiritual conceit that he is holier than others because he is set apart to handle holy things. Let him beware of the peril of professionalism! The mother's peril is that in loving her child she may overlove him by taking too large a place in his life, thus giving his individuality no fair chance to grow inwardly strong. Let her beware of willfulness in loving! The father's peril is sentimentalism—the opposite of the mother's peril. Due to his preoccupation with business, he may fail to assume his responsible part in his child's upbringing. And irresponsible love tends to become sentimentalism. Let him invent ways to enter into his child's life if he would avoid this peril! Even being religious, which is life's supreme good, is also life's supreme peril. The peril here is pharisaism. The truly good man is never sure of his goodness. He knows the perils of the way and is aware that he is always "standing in the need of prayer."

Perilous Living

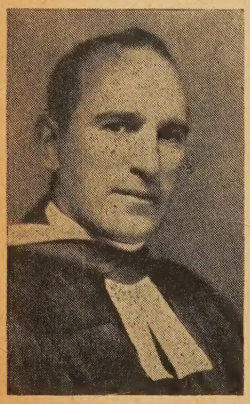
Charles Clayton Morrison

I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church

By JOHN SUTHERLAND BONNELL

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." St. John 13:35.

A NEW YORK business man said to me recently: "I attended a service of worship in your church a few weeks ago. When the congregation stood and recited the Apostles' Creed I was greatly surprised, especially when they repeated the words 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.' "



I explained to the man that the Apostles' Creed was one of the creeds in use by all Christians before the final break between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Western or Roman branch, and that most Protestant churches accept the creeds of the undivided church.

"But," he said, "what about that phrase, the 'Holy Catholic Church'? Do you believe in that, too?"

"Yes, we do," I replied, "you see, the word 'catholic' is derived from the Latin 'catholicus' which means 'general' or 'universal.' So when we affirm 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church,' we are saying 'I believe in the universal church composed of all who truly follow Jesus Christ.' "

AN ANCIENT TERM

The earliest use of the word "catholic" as applied to the Christian church is found in the writings of Ignatius in the early part of the second century A.D. It signified "the whole body of believers as distinguished from a particular group of Christians or an individual congregation."

Presbyterians are especially interested to know that the word "catholic" is clearly defined in the Scotch Confession of Faith of 1560. Referring to the Holy Catholic Church it says: "Which kirk is catholic, that is universal, because it contains the elect of all ages, all realms, all nations, all tongues . . . who have communion with God the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

It would be difficult to find a better definition than this. Whenever, therefore, we say "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church" an innumerable host of Christians rise up before us in spiritual vision,—the vast invisible congregation of Christians whose names are known only to God. That is the Holy Catholic Church.

After the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century the title "Holy Catholic Church" was exclusively claimed by the Western or Roman branch of Christianity.

In a catechism which is on sale in most Roman Catholic churches this question is asked: "In which church are these attributes of the Holy Catholic Church found?" The answer is "These attributes of the Holy Catholic Church are found in the Holy Roman Catholic Church alone." When the adjective "Roman" is introduced the original definition of the word is lost; thus, one branch of Christianity arrogates to itself as its sole prerogative that which belongs properly to all true Christians.

This exclusive claim is even more expressly made in a pamphlet entitled "Freedom of Worship—The Catholic Position." Its author is Francis J. Connell, and it is published by the Paulist Press. It carries the Imprimatur of Francis J. Spellman, Archbishop of New York, now Cardinal. I quote:

> "They (the Roman Catholics) believe that the Catholic Church is the only organization authorized by God to teach religious truth and to conduct public religious worship. Consequently, they hold that any creed which differs from that of the Catholic Church is erroneous, and that any religious organization which is separated from the Catholic Church lacks the approval and authorization of God."
>
> ". . . From this it follows that, as far as God's law is concerned, no one has a real right to accept any religion save the Catholic religion, or to be a member of any church save the Catholic Church, or to practice any form of divine worship save that commanded or sanctioned by the Catholic Church. . . ."
>
> "Such then is the first Catholic principle relevant to religious liberty—that man has not an unqualified right to practice any religion he may choose. . . ."
>
> *"Neither does it necessarily oblige others to allow him the unrestricted practice of his religious beliefs."* (Italics mine.)

Up to this point the enlightened Protestant will smile and go his way worshiping God according to the dictates of his conscience and enjoying the privilege of religious freedom. The italicized sentence at the close of the above quotation, however, may leave him with a vague feeling of uneasiness. He may begin to suspect that the ever-advancing claim of Rome might yet imperil his liberty.

When a religious organization makes the explicit and unequivocal claim to be the sole custodian of the truth and the sole dispenser of the grace and salvation of Almighty God, it is only a short step from that claim to a militant denial of the right of any other church to teach or propagate its faith. This has now happened.

Here is a book, "Catholic Principles of Politics," written by Father John A. Ryan and Professor Francis J. Boland of Notre Dame University. It bears the Imprimatur of Archbishop Spellman, now Cardinal. On page 318 we read:

> "The fact that the individual may in good faith think that his false religion is true gives no more right to propagate it than . . . the perverted ethical notions of the dealer in obscene literature confer upon him a

> right to corrupt the morals of a community. . . . Now the action of preaching and writing are at once capable of becoming quite as injurious to the community as any other actions and quite as subject to rational restraint."

Now, there are two fallacies in this paragraph which should be obvious to all. The first is the suggestion that the Protestant religion is false. This is simply a biased judgment passed by one branch of Christianity upon another, carrying with it no moral or spiritual authority so far as we are concerned.

The second is the suggestion that Protestant writing and preaching may be as injurious to the public as obscene literature. This assertion is demonstrably false, since Protestant preaching and teaching has produced in this nation tens of thousands of the noblest men and women in American history. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

It was this Protestant teaching and preaching which also laid firm and strong the moral and spiritual foundations of the American nation.

According to Justin Wroe Nixon, out of four million inhabitants in the American colonies in 1763 there were only about twenty-two thousand Roman Catholics. As Professor G. P. Gooch, the noted historian, has said: "The democratic church has grown into a democratic state." And that democratic church was Protestant to the core. It is a little late now for us to be told that our religion is false and that we possess no more right to propagate it than does the "dealer in obscene literature" to peddle his unwholesome wares. One wishes that Roman Catholic leaders could be more temperate—not to say more Christian—in their language, especially when referring to the faith that forty-six millions of their fellow-countrymen hold dear.

THERE IS REASON FOR ALARM

Protestants are not unduly disturbed even when Roman Catholic leaders publish detractions of our faith. We begin to be alerted and alarmed, however, when they declare their right to limit Protestant religious freedom if and when they should become a majority in the nation.

In "Catholic Principles of Politics" by Ryan and Boland (pages 320 and 321) it is frankly stated as an "eternal and unchangeable truth" of the Roman Catholic Church that whenever that church secures a position of overwhelming majority in a nation it has the right to expect the state to impose restrictions on all non-Catholics in their religious teachings and propaganda, and deny them privileges extended to the Roman Catholic Church, such as exemption from taxation. Then we are assured that while this is all true "in logic and theory" American Protestants need not be alarmed since such a dominant position cannot be gained by the Roman Catholic Church for years to come.

These comforting words fail to reassure us, however, when we see what is happening under our eyes in various Roman Catholic countries around the world.

A Roman Catholic priest in Brooklyn sent me a clipping from "The Tablet," one of the publications of his church, containing an article by Richard Pattee on non-Catholic minorities in Spain. It denied categorically that there is any persecution or repression of Protestants in Spain. Protestants are allowed to distribute their literature and their churches are open, and are distinguished by large visible signs to indicate that they are Protestant places of worship.

Last summer I determined to go to Spain and investigate the situation at first hand. In talking with more than a score of Protestant ministers and visiting as many churches, I discovered that all Protestant schools in Spain, once housing seven thousand pupils, are closed and the children required to go to schools where Roman Catholic instruction is compulsory. Protestants are not permitted publicly to bury their dead with the rites of their churches; to print hymn books or Bibles; to reply in the public press to any attacks made on them; or to place any signs on their churches denoting they are places of worship. They have been jailed and fined for holding meetings of Bible study and prayer in their homes. There have been repeated disorders, culminating in the case at Linares on June 27, 1948, with attacks on Protestant worshipers by thirty Catholic youths using rubber truncheons and brass knuckles.

CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITATIONS

The Spanish constitution of June 17, 1945 (Section six), reads: "The profession and practice of the Catholic religion, which is the religion of the Spanish state, will enjoy official protection. No one will be molested for his religious beliefs nor for private adherence to his code. No public ceremonies or manifestations will be permitted in any religion other than the Catholic religion."

In the summer of 1948, Cardinal Pla y Deniel, Primate of Spain, on behalf of all Spanish bishops and archbishops stated that any interpretation of this section which indicates that it permits public worship on the part of Protestants is a perversion of the law which permits only private worship by Protestants in Spain.

On September 10 of last year Cardinal Segura, bishop of Seville, issued a pastoral letter denouncing the Protestants and demanding abolition of "these centers of false religions in Spain." A few weeks later the first of a series of attacks on Protestant churches began and the Catholic Action Youth left leaflets amid the wreckage of the pews declaring, "The Holy Inquisition did not limit itself to talking. We make ourselves heirs of the Inquisitorial Spirit."

One of the Protestant pastors makes this rather pathetic appeal: "We hope that public opinion in free countries will make Catholics ashamed of what the Catholic Church is doing in Spain, and that they will oblige the Pope and the Spanish prelates to be reasonable concerning us as you are with the Catholics living in the Protestant countries."

In ordinary times such proceedings would be deplorable. Today, when anti-Christian forces in the

world threaten to blot out all religious freedom it is tragic and unthinkable that any one branch of the Christian faith should seek to deny to others the right to witness for the gospel of their Lord and Master, whether they are a minority or majority in any nation. This is of the very essence of religious freedom and democracy as we Americans understand it.

If there were only one thousand Roman Catholics in this nation, our American concept of religious freedom would afford to them the fullest expression of their faith, both in public worship and in religious propaganda.

Let it not be forgotten that one of our four freedoms for which our sons fought and bled and for which many of them died was freedom of religion.

It is utterly absurd for any branch of Christianity to claim that it has a monopoly of truth or virtue or of the grace of God, especially when we have the opportunity day by day of brushing shoulders with its adherents.

Dean Inge of London made a typically incisive comment at this point: "It is becoming impossible for those who mix at all with their fellow-men to believe that the grace of God is distributed denominationally."

In November, 1947, the Reverend Father Ford, a tolerant, courageous, public-spirited Roman Catholic priest, delivered an address in Boston in which he pleaded for Protestant and Roman Catholic churchmen to meet around a conference table and settle their differences.

Approximately a year earlier Bishop Oxnam called upon Cardinal Spellman and made a similar proposal to him. Nothing has yet come of these suggestions, and it is very doubtful if anything will.

A recent address by Archbishop Cushing of Boston would seem to have closed the door on any hope of such a friendly conference.

HOW SHOULD WE REACT?

How should we react, as Protestant people, to this situation? Our text has the answer: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another."

There is no place in Christianity for intolerance and hate. It is un-Christian and un-Christlike. "This is my commandment," said Jesus, "that ye love one another as I have loved you."

Our Lord clearly understood that this world can never achieve the brotherhood of man until Christian brotherhood has been demonstrated within the ranks of the Church of Christ.

By what right can Roman Catholic and Protestant leaders exhort the nations of the world to compose their differences when their own controversy remains unresolved? We call upon the Jews and the Arabs to show mutual tolerance when Christian minorities in many nations are hindered in the exercise of their faith simply because they are minorities. How may we expect rival ideologies to exist side by side in peace throughout the world if different interpretations of Christianity cannot live side by side in peace within the bounds of this nation?

Let us continue to cherish in our hearts love and good will for those who differ from us. This is the hallmark of genuine discipleship.

At the same time, we must continue to be alert to every threat which endangers the religious freedom which is our birthright.

If we lack that Christian love in our hearts no profession of creedal loyalty to Christian dogma will ever qualify us as true disciples of our Lord.

WE HAVE REASON TO BE PROUD

As we look back over the history of this nation what a thrill of pride sweeps over us as we see the notable roles that Protestantism has played in our history! It laid the foundations of religious freedom whereby every man has the inalienable right and privilege to seek for truth and to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, none daring to make him afraid. It has contributed richly to the rise of American democracy, wherein the form of government is determined by the governed, and their rulers are responsible to the people. It put the Bible into the hands of the common people, making them familiar with the Scriptures, which teach from Genesis to Revelation that the individual stands in immediate relationship to God, and that Divine grace and salvation are available without any human intermediary.

Let us never forget, however, that every privilege brings a corresponding responsibility. May we hold ever aloft the torch of Truth passed on to us by the hands of our fathers, so that its kindling rays shall penetrate to earth's remotest boundaries, carrying into lands where intolerance and darkness and slavery reign the light and the love and the liberty of his gospel who said: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

A Pastoral Prayer

By HARRY E. PHILO

HEAVENLY FATHER, who in the beginning of the ways of things, called forth into being all the starry host and the celestial lights; and from the void all things came to be, because they heard thy creative voice and were awakened by thy creative power; send unto us also thy creative call that we may be alerted to the great things which await us. As the light and the darkness, the day and the night, and the orderly sequence of the seasons have learned to know thy way, may we write thy commandments upon the tablets of our hearts, so that thy way will become our way, day by day.

Thou, O Father, wilt lead us steadily but firmly, toward the dawning of the more perfect day. Thou

wilt lead us toward that time when we shall understand, not in part, as now, but in the fullness of divine revelation. Thou O God art able to lead us out of the confines of uncertainty and confusion into the complete understanding of all that is, so that we shall then know, even as thou dost know us. We pray that we may place our lives under thy obedience so that we can be led and instructed and blessed by thee.

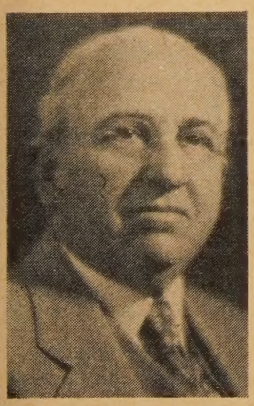
Thou hast placed in our hands, O God, the wonderful keys, which if rightly used and appropriated will release us from so many of the fears and anxieties which beset us here, and free us from sinful temptations and unruly desires. Thou hast called us to become as the salt of the earth, and the light of the world, and the hope which hopeth in every heart. We must not fail thee. If there are those who have never felt thy Spirit move in upon them with its mighty persuasive power to redeem and to restore, may it not be withheld from them any longer. If there are those who have any mental reservations about thee, may they know that much of the time we must walk more by faith than by sight upon this earth. And there are none of us, O Father, who are so proud, so self-sufficient and so complete in every way, but that we must needs bow humbly before thee, saying, "God be merciful to me, for I am foolish in so many ways." But we praise thee that thou art able to take the weak and the foolish things of this earth and make them count for greatness in thy kingdom. Hear us, Almighty God, when we pray, and take not thy Holy Spirit from us. Amen.

The Vista of the Years

By REV. ORVIS F. JORDAN

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. Rev. 21:15.

AN OLD man in his seventies whom we shall call Mr. Everyman came up to another New Year's day. It happened to him again as it had happened on many another. He stopped his weary climb up his Mount Nebo, and turned to look backward. Down the winding road he could see the tollgates that marked his seventy years and more. Some of these tollgates were more important than others.



He remembered the year when he left the protecting care of his mother's arms, and lived longer every day with a strange teacher than he did with his own mother. He had cried, and did not want to go to school any more. But gradually he came to see that he might hope to grow big enough to cope with the boys on the playground and smart enough to understand the strange symbols that were on the blackboard.

When he was fourteen he had a particularly vivid New Year's day, one that he would never forget. His too short coat sleeves and his too short pants legs proclaimed to the world that he was almost a man. He had suddenly come to feel that he did not want to be a man. Behind him were playground memories, so very happy. Ahead of him was toil. Inside him were strange new emotions. He cared less for the boy gang, and more for the face of a beautiful creature that once he had thought was ugly. Inside him was a new understanding of guilt, and he timidly raised his face to the sky to pray. Was he a lost soul? No wonder that he wept on this day. Life was terrifying. But at the end of the day he accepted all that had come to him. There was a beautiful glow in his heart as he started out to explore the adult world.

Something like this experience happened a good many times. On commencement day at college, he got on the train to leave behind him alma mater, and once more he could have wept, but he was a man now, and he must be strong. He remembered friends that he would see but seldom henceforth. His face was turned toward a vocation, but was he adequate to its demands? Then regret for a beautiful past and fear of an impending future made way for hope. He saw himself as a commander of men, as the originator of new ideas. And he was quite happy again.

MR. EVERYMAN WAS HAPPY

He never dreamed that when he stood up in the church to be married to his sweeet-heart that any doubt could haunt his heart. But the doubt came, and for a minute a regret over the loss of his bachelor freedom. But one look at his bride wiped it all out and then he saw himself marching through the years with her by his side and a troop of merry children coming after.

Now people say that Mr. Everyman is old. He does not feel old, but he knows now that he has entered a new epoch in human experience. Shall he act like the merry old folks in a radio broadcast called "Life Begins at Eighty?" Should the effort be to make the community feel that he is just as young as he used to be, or is there a possibility of giving his world the fruit of a long life's experience as once did Oliver Wendell Holmes, of the Supreme Court?

But however many years he may acquire, the end of the road is near at hand. Once more Mr. Everyman stands at the brink of a great change. Religion

has taken from his soul most of the fear, but his flesh shrinks from its dissolution. There are the causes for which he has fought, which now must find new defenders. There are the people he has loved—but many of these have already preceded him up the mount. Is he to perish near the summit as did the brave British mountain-climbers on the upper levels of Mt. Everest, or shall he at last plant his banner at the very top?

EVERYMAN REMEMBERS

But on this New Year's day the old man again turns his view back down the road that he has traveled. He sees things now that he had almost forgotten. He has not been alone on the road most of the time. From childhood on up, he has had traveling companions most of the time. His welfare has been tied up with theirs. They have stopped along the way to eat together, and to get the other things that are needful. In seventy years what changes have come over this? More than ever, the farmers were driven into cooperation until there had appeared in Congress many years ago a "farm bloc." The workmen who once took what was offered them at the factroy gate became discontented with their wages and working conditions, and formed organizations to right their grievances. Mr. Everyman was much frightened by all of this at first. The talk sounded revolutionary. As a matter of fact it was revolutionary, and he was always afraid of revolution. But after all the years, looking back he is not so much afraid any more. When workingmen were too greedy, the white-collared man built a machine to do his work and he had to hunt another job and meditate upon the results of his selfishness. And when the employer was too greedy he was afflicted by more and more coercive legislation. If he did not know how to run a business humanely, the public would have to teach him.

What has happened from all of this? The millennium predicted by starry-eyed agitators has not come. There are still many old shacks used as human habitations that ought to be torn down, and there are still many workers, especially the white-collared ones, who have real grievances. But things are better.

GOOD CAN COME FROM EVIL

Even the economic storm known as the big depression which was so grievous for a time, resulted in better techniques of production. When profits are big, invention lags, but when profits grow less or disappear, then invention flourishes. This great depression that seemed so terrible hurt the night clubs more than it did the churches. It brought business to the public libraries that they had not enjoyed for many a day. When the storm was over society was sadder but much wiser. The extravagant hopes of pre-depression days were no longer voiced, but one heard a cautious optimism that depressions might at last be overcome. Down that road to the long ago one may still see the battle smoke of three great wars. One began with the conviction that Spaniards had sunk one of our battleships in the Havana harbor, and men had fought valiantly under the slogan "Remember the Maine." Later great historians like Beard declared that Spain had nothing to do with the sinking of the Maine. How strangely God makes the wrath of men to praise him! A war that began in a lie freed the Cubans and the Filipinos, in spite of politicians who sought to turn America into a world empire.

There was another war in which the leaders declared that it was a war to end war. It did not end war at all, but it is now seen that it ended peace for a whole lifetime. In this war the slogan was "Make the world safe for democracy" and now the world has less democracy than in a hundred years. In this war we learned for the first time to pour death and destruction from the sky, killing old people and women and little children indiscriminately.

After an armistice that was exactly what the word implies, a temporary cessation of hostilities, there came the first truly world war of all history. Naked savages heard the guns in distant parts of the world. No peoples were exempt from all of its effects. This war still goes on as a "cold war" with combatants changing sides now and then to give variety to the picture.

EVERYMAN IS AFRAID

Poor old Everyman is frankly terrified by the scene. Someone once asked him what he had to lose by an atomic bomb. At first he said he had nothing to lose, but then he remembered the little grandchildren that come over to stay all night. He remembered younger people who had studied under his tutelage. Could he think complacently of all these perishing? Though he is old, Everyman takes up his most powerful weapons and fights the war menace with all his flagging strength. As embattled Frenchmen once cried out as they fought, "They shall not pass," so Everyman stands firm giving blow for blow as he contends with the war-makers. But he is more afraid down in his heart than in all of his years.

In the midst of all these alarms is another one about the personal liberties that men have gained through a thousand years of struggle. These are now threatened by a militant communism. It is not like the communism of early Christians when no man called anything he had his own, because there were values much greater than those of food and raiment. It is a communism imposed on the unwilling by force of arms. It is a communism that is anti-God, and opposed to the great freedoms of the western world.

It spreads from year to year. Every cry of human misery opens another door to it, in spite of the fact that it now has the greatest force of slave labor since the days of ancient Rome. But Everyman sees even in this that the hand of God is greater than the wrath of man. A great people has learned to read and write, and reading and writing will one day abolish slavery. The anti-God people have indeed

turned churches into barracks, but they have cleared a great people from superstition.

Everyman knows he is in the midst of world revolution and he is afraid. The people that lead the world revolution think that it is humanity's last revolution. But Everyman pulls at his beard and says, as did an old Greek when the nazis goose-stepped through Athens, "This, too, shall pass." There is no last revolution, for God has declared that he will make all things new. An ancient Greek philosopher called Heraclitus declared: "You cannot step into the same river; for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you." Whether there be any abiding element in reality, Everyman does not know, for he is no metaphysician, but he does know that through change the world renews itself. It is ever dying and ever coming to life.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

Our old man would like to know what it all means. New Year's day challenges him to think about the meaning and goal of life, no matter how useless his quest may be. He ran across a book the other day that was turned out by one of his fellow-travelers. A Frenchman by the name of Lecomte du Nouy in a little volume called "Human Destiny" essays the noble task of giving meaning to life. He is a scientist, but he leaves test tube and reagents to ponder the greatest mysteries of life.

This du Nouy does not agree with what his fellow philosopher, Bertrand Russell, has written: "that life has no meaning, but is a temporary accident in a universe where it cannot happen again."

Accepting the assured results of science, he is unafraid of what can come out of laboratories. He quite agrees that laboratories must get their motivations from religion, else men shall destroy the race. But he does not fear the terrible new forces revealed by research. There is a force much mightier than the atomic bomb—the power of the living God.

Perhaps he was afraid once in the presence of wars and depressions, and materialistic communism, but he is afraid no more, for he has found God and thinks he can discern in the brief history of man upon this little planet the thing that God is trying to achieve. He would agree with the great teacher who declared: "My Father worketh up to now and I work." Creation is not over. It has barely begun. The spiritual house of man must be built, just as his physical house.

So Mr. Everyman as he nears the top of Mt. Nebo finds a cave. In this cave he puts a manuscript telling about the things that have happened in his little lifetime. He hopes that some day another man who travels this road may find it, and wonder at the fears and hopes of Everyman in 1949.

Like Everyman, we turn our faces backward for a moment, this New Year's day, a bit regretful. We wish for a moment that things were like they used to be, and we are afraid of what shortly shall be, but a good Father takes us into his arms and bids us look on the dawn of our grandson's day. Then we thank God for change and decay and rebirth, for in the midst of it all is the Grand Architect of the "house not made with hands eternal in the heavens." In him we trust.

The Coal Man's Good Deed

A Sermon for Children by REUBEN JESCHKE

ONE Saturday morning last fall a truck arrived at our house with part of our winter's coal supply. As the driver had no helper, he had to put the coal in the basement all by himself: and since there was no way for him to drive near to the basement window he brought one wheelbarrow-full after another down the walk and emptied them into the coal bin. When he was finished it was almost noon.

In the afternoon he returned with another truck-ful. Again he had to work for a long time, wheeling all that coal a barrow at a time to the cellar window. The day had become quite warm and the perspiration flowed from his skin, making the black coal dust stick to his face, hands and arms. He asked for a glass which we were glad to lend him. Time and again he went to the faucet at the side of the house for a refreshing drink of water. Then, when he was finished, he came to the door, all black and wet, so that I could pay him and sign the paper which said that the coal had been delivered at my house.

In spite of all his work he was still cheerful. "I'm not supposed to work on Saturday afternoon," he remarked, "but they told me you would like to have all your coal in today, so I brought the rest this afternoon." He could just as easily have made me wait for that second load until Monday but to please me he had been willing to spend those extra hours of work.

It so happens I didn't remember having said anything like that, and I would have been perfectly willing to wait until Monday. But I liked the way this man felt about it. For the sake of helping someone he was willing to do more than he had to do.

How many people are there who will not do a single thing beyond what is required of them? In the home we often behave like that. Yet this is not right and does not show a good spirit. Jesus meant to

show us a better way when he said that if someone asks us to go one mile with him, we should be willing to go two miles. What others do for us just because they think they must does not make us too happy. That which is done out of pure willingness is what adds to any deed the power to bring happiness.

"Landmarks of the Way to God"

By MERRILL R. ABBEY

NUMBERS of us have grown increasingly uncertain about God. Many men who were at first wistful or apologetic about the loss of him now boast that a vital philosophy and even a worthy religion can best be built not so much around ideas of the divine as about high purposes for a fairer life among men. A student standing in a Gothic chapel drew a question mark in a vacant niche, and when his companion inquired what that meant, replied, "That is for God." Dean Bosley remarked concerning him, "That young man engaged in putting symbols of doubt in places reserved for symbols of faith is himself an all too apt symbol of the spiritual climate of these days."

We do not lack strong and forceful ideas about God. We can state theological opinions with no little eloquence, and in many circles one of the best ways to stimulate discussion is to raise a religious question. In the same circles, however, discussion would yield to embarrassed silence if someone should suggest that the group engage in prayer.

THE BIBLE SPEAKS TO US

In all this the Bible speaks to our need. For dynamic as are its teachings about God, so that the great theologies of all the centuries find their impelling source in its vivid literature, it is never primarily concerned so much with correct ideas as with vitally right relations. Seeking a word that will lead to real communion with God, therefore, one is not surprised to find it dramatically set forth in the first book of the Bible. One of the most earthy figures in any literature is Jacob, son of Isaac. A man of crafty plans and strong action, he lives a troubled life that turns out to be a long pilgrimage to God. At three turning points of the way Jacob, deeply moved by his experiences, erects stones to mark a spot he is determined never to forget. To those landmarks I wish we might turn this morning, to catch the impact of the experiences they memorialize.

The first landmark stands in a lonely place in the wilderness. The story in Genesis recalls it in these words: "And Jacob . . . took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar . . . and he called the name of that place Beth-el." What did that landmark signify?

Its story begins with Jacob's wily plot to defraud his brother Esau. There had been the incident of the hunter's stew, Esau returning from the fields famished and offering his birthright, on the principle of "a bird in the hand," for an appetizing meal. Jacob had followed up the consequences of that impulsive moment until he had treacherously collected his brother's inheritance. Then, terrified by Esau's explosive anger, he had fled for his life. As the first night closed in on him in the wilderness he lay down with a stone for a pillow to a fitful, dream-filled sleep. Flight from the consequences of his guilt had proved more difficult than he anticipated. Neither the wilderness fastnesses nor the oblivion of sleep could hide him from a pursuer with whom he had failed to reckon.

WHAT DID THE DREAM MEAN?

What lay back of the dream of this fugitive who saw a ladder let down from heaven with angels ascending and descending from the throne of God to his pillow of stone? Was it fear? Or his unrestrained ambition? Was it the voice of the good he had repressed and whose demands he had refused to face? Was it conscience? Or could it really have been God? In Jacob's own mind there was no question. Do you suppose there need be any in ours? If you believe in God at all, what is more to be expected than that the Father of all would seek to lead his children? When we have learned a little of the psychological mechanisms by which experiences come to us we need not suppose that such knowledge tells where they come *from,* any more than a telegram originates in the wires so that when we have explained the machinery through which it came we have ruled out the possibility of a sender. So Jacob, deeply moved by his certainty of God's presence, erected his first landmark.

Even in God's presence, however, Jacob continued his bargaining, trying to exact the best agreement he could even from God. "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar,

shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

Jacob kept his bargain with high integrity, faithfully setting aside for God a tenth of all that came to him. It gave his life the drive of a centralized purpose and the strength of an abiding confidence in an invincible ally. It reinforced Jacob's native capacity as a shrewd and ambitious bargainer. It led to assured prosperity. But it did not make Jacob an amiable character to live with. It left him still the kind of man his associates must watch closely whenever they dealt with him, lest his sharp bargaining defraud them of all they had. Nor did it give Jacob any secure peace within himself. He had met God, but the encounter had left Jacob still in the center of his own life, no deep loyalties surrendered, still seeking to remain in command, manipulating his dealings with God as he had those with his brother.

MEN TRY TO USE GOD

Religion is constantly open to that perversion. Men meet God and begin to try to use him. The life of stewardship has many times been advocated as a means to personal prosperity. "Those who set aside a tenth of all they earn for God grow wealthy," the argument runs; and there is much evidence to support the contention. There are reasons why it may be so. A purposeful, disciplined, planned life has the essentials of financial success; and the tithing steward unquestionably does live by purpose, discipline and plan. But tithing motivated by the will to be rich may also make an unlovely character, for such a life has made no high surrender to God. Self still holds the reins, using the practices of great religion in an attempt to manipulate God for its own ends.

Even prayer can be used on these low levels. A man meets God and discovers that prayer is one of life's most powerful energies. Thenceforth he seeks to use prayer to secure the fulfillment of his own desires. In view of all the evidence there is little room for doubt that even on its lower levels prayer does open the doors on which men persistently knock. Yet it falls far short of our Lord's own rule of prayer, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." It cannot pray, as did Jesus in Gethsemane, "Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt." Self still stands at the center, unsurrendered, seeking to command God. So doing, it treats him as less than God and makes impossible the greatest things he yearns to do for his children.

THE SECOND LANDMARK

A pile of stones at a place remembered to history as Mizpah is the second landmark of Jacob's pilgrimage. The record recalls its origin thus: "And they took stones and made an heap . . . and Laban said, This is a witness between me and thee this day. . . . For he said, The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another."

These words, often used as a benediction invoked by friends on each other in parting, have gathered to themselves hallowed associations of warmhearted fellowship. How lovely they are for all the members of a comradely group. When these words were first used, however, it was not as an expression of tender fellowship but of mutual distrust.

With good reason Laban and Jacob suspected each other. Hardness had been the keynote of their dealings for many years. So they entered into a pact together. In that pact Jacob came to see God as the inescapable watchman of all his ways, an all-important forward step in his pilgrimage. It gave him what is the source of all dependable character, an inward monitor that would not allow a shameful act even if no man saw.

Victor Hugo, in his greatest story, paints a picture which illustrates this. Javert, the policeman, has identified Jean Valjean, the escaped convict grown not only respectable but a useful and even venerable member of society. What shall he do! As a man he honors the recovery of character Jean Valjean has made, and would shield him from disgrace. Yet his policeman's conscience is troubled about his duty to society. He could resign from public service, he tells himself. But a horrible question haunts him—"How could I manage to hand in my resignation to God?" Against that implacable watchman not even resignation would avail. Javert finally attempted to solve his problem through suicide, but that only transferred it to another scene.

This sense of the inescapable watchman is a basic need of each of us. Without it no great work is done, no character of durable nobility achieved. For want of it our modern world is crumbling into chaotic ruins, and will continue to pile ruin on ruin so long as agreements are only to be kept while preponderant human power enforces them. Life without such a sense of God's watchful claims becomes a shambles. All this one remembers as he views a heap of stones at a place called Mizpah.

THE MOST IMPORTANT EXPERIENCE

Still a third place is marked for memory in the pilgrimage of Jacob. "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." This was the experience Jacob needed most of all. During a sleepless night Jacob wrestled with God, not knowing who his adversary might be. When he refused to surrender, his opponent struck him a blow from which he limped ever after. "What is your name?" the other wrestler asked, and Jacob told him; but when Jacob inquired his opponent's name there was no answer. This is significant in the light of the customs of the ancient East, where a man's name was thought to convey the core of his personality, so that to know his name was to have a subtle power over him. Jacob's yielding up his own name to an antagonist whose name remained a mysterious secret was the orient's symbol of surrender. Out of this deep personal encounter Jacob came saying, "I have seen God face to face."

His self-assurance dropped away. He walked with

a limp, but at last he walked in paths of understanding fellowship with his fellow men. He met his brother Esau and worked out a reconciliation of their life-long feud. He was thenceforth a new man, no longer seeking to manipulate God to his own ends, nor haunted by the dread footfalls of a divine Watchman from whom he fled in fear and inner torments of division. His personal encounter with God had displaced his egocentric self from control of his life and given command to another who led him to harmonies he could not achieve on the old unhappy basis.

WE MUST SURRENDER OURSELVES

Our world is in the throes of such a wrestle now. For some of us that wrestle is a paramount personal issue. While we continue to center life in ourselves we cannot have inner harmony. We get in our own way in personal relations. We solve one problem of character only to topple into another. We meet life's unexpected tragedies with no capacity to master them, for we have not attained the basis of Christ's surrendered prayer, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

But there is a way of getting these troublesome selves off our hands. It is the way of genuine Christian humility, penitently surrendering the command of our lives to God and trusting him to achieve in us what we cannot achieve for ourselves.

Martin Luther once said in his graphic way, that the world is like a drunken peasant; put him on one side of his horse and he slips off the other side. Who can deny the tragic truth of that judgment? For both society and our personal lives it remains true that while we keep up this ego-centric living we slip out of one turmoil into another. Yet we need not. We could make a central surrender of loyalty and devotion today that would put one at the center of our lives whose command is so sure and unfailing that those who have let him in as King of all their lives have in one way or another always echoed St. Paul's testimony, "I can do all things through him who strengtheneth me."

God's Plan for Your Life

By FREDERICK ANDREW ROBLEE

In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths. Proverbs 3:6.

HORACE BUSHNELL was one of the most famous and influential ministers and civic leaders of the nineteenth century. He had a profound influence upon the religious and cultural life of New England. In what was perhaps his most famous sermon, the one on "Every Man's Life a Plan of God," this famous preacher declared: "God has a definite life-plan for every human person, girding him, visibly or invisibly, for some exact thing, which it will be the true significance and glory of his life to have accomplished."

How it would change our whole outlook on life, if we actually could believe this! Many people, however, think that they cannot believe it. And among them are some of the most loving and sensitive souls in the world. They ask how it is possible to square the thought of every man's life being a plan of God with such things as the birth of deformed children, the inexpressible horrors of an atomic bombed city, and the tragic injustice and blind suffering all about us. It seems that either God is not in control or if he is, he is not what Jesus taught us to believe about him. As one sensitive soul put it, "Your 'God' is my devil!"

Must we conclude then, that there is no God or, if there is, that he has no love, no real interest or concern for individual human beings? Let us look at this all-important question.

To deny Jesus' conception of God is really to assert that man is an orphan in this universe, but this is an untenable position. There is no real evidence that man is an orphan in the universe and overwhelming evidence that he is not. It is quite clear that man did not make himself. It is also quite clear that his nature and his very existence are the result of a great many factors of heredity and environment which are essential aspects of total reality. There is a marvelous interdependence of everything including, of course, the existence of man and those things which are essential to his life. By way of illustration, for example, consider the adaptation of relation between the human eye and seeable wave lengths of light; the human ear and audible wave lengths of sound; the human nose and odors which attract and repel; and, the human tongue and tastes that are pleasant and unpleasant. On a very much higher level the same thing holds true, namely, the adaptation and relation between the mind of man and the truth to be known; the will of man and the life which he is supposed to live; and, the spirit of man and the faith which illumines and inspires. All this and much more must be taken into account if we are to understand the kind of universe in which we are living. To repeat, there is no real evidence that man is an orphan in the universe and overwhelming evidence that he is not.

How then shall we think of God and of our relationship with him? Jesus taught us to think of God *as Father*—the understanding, all-wise parent. An

earthly father cannot and does not control everything in the heredity and environment of his children. If he did so, his children would not be free and responsible personalities. Nevertheless, an earthly father (if he is worthy of being a father) has a plan, a purpose and a great love for every one of his children. In very much the same way and for the same fundamental reasons, God does not control everything in man's heredity and environment, yet he has a wonderful plan, a divine purpose and a great love for each and every one of his children. For clear thinking, it is essential to understand and to keep always in mind that God, the sovereign and eternal Creator, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, has chosen to limit himself by bringing into existence free and responsible human personalities; men and women who may be obedient to his divine plan and intention and so achieve abundant life or who, choosing to disobey his commandments, suffer terrible consequences.

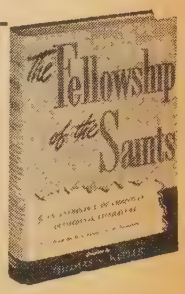
GOD DOES CARE

God is not without love and concern for his creatures in having made the world in this fashion, for it seems clear that only in this kind of world, where responsibility is real and personal, could there be such things as moral character, faith, hope and love. God wants us to be his responsible sons and daughters, not his marionettes or even his slaves. This is simple and fundamental Christian truth and it does much to clarify the whole problem of life. Therefore, it is simply not true that God controls everything such as the birth of deformed children, the bombing of cities, injustice and suffering. Evil is contrary to God's will and results from the denial of that will. Nevertheless, God, our Heavenly Father, has a plan, a purpose and a great love for each and every one of us, his children.

Several years ago an article appeared in *The Reader's Digest* which helps us get our thinking straight about the nature of God's providence. It is a story told by a mother whose son was crippled at five years of age. She and her husband wanted for their boy a full and valuable life. But how could this be? She wrote, "We told each other that to do this he must give all he could to the world, rather than take all that people rushed to hand him." This was both hard and difficult of accomplishment. First there was just the struggle to preserve life. Then there were two apparently fruitless operations. Then the little crippled boy didn't want to study, so there were occasions when he got spanked. Later his courageous parents encouraged him to play baseball and even football. All along were painful treatments which simply had to be endured. When he was in high school, one of his fellow students—a poor boy—became very sick and needed a blood transfusion. These parents suggested to their crippled son that he might give some of his blood, and he did. Still later another and daring operation seemed indicated, and

(Continued on page 17)

BOOKS *for the* NEW YEAR



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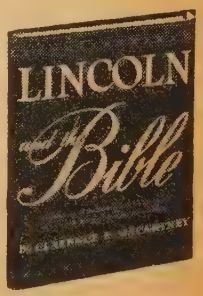

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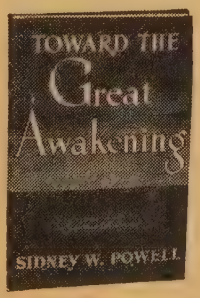

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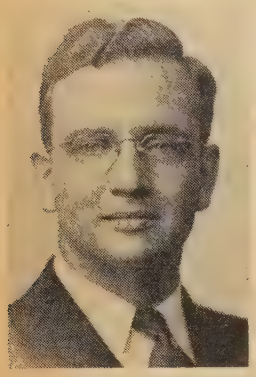
The Joy That Is Set Before You

By EUGENE L. SMITH

CHRISTIANITY is a joyous religion, and the true Christian is a radiant person. His radiance is strangely independent of time and place and circumstance. The early apostles, called to court and brutally lashed for preaching the name of Christ, departed, "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name." One of history's dramatic pictures is the sight of begrimed, brutalized coal miners on their knees before John Wesley, in the sight of a throng at an open air service, with tears marking their paths down hardened cheeks caked with coal dust. The astonishing transformations in those exploited lives is evidence of what it means truly to discover how deeply God loves us. The joy of that discovery has power to remake any life, to redeem any nation. No wonder Christians sing:



Rejoice, ye pure in heart,
Rejoice, give thanks and sing;
Your glorious banner wave on high,
The cross of Christ your King.

To the sceptic, however, that verse simply does not make sense. To tell people to "rejoice" and at the same time to wave on high a banner which is a cross seems to him nonsense. How can the cross, history's supreme symbol of black despair, of bitter suffering, of dark infamy, be a cause of joy to anybody? Especially, how can people who profess to love the man who there unjustly suffered, rejoice at the symbol of a cross? But we remember Paul's comment, "God has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise."

THE CROSS HAD MEANING FOR JESUS

To Christ the cross meant far more than one monumental experience of a certain Friday afternoon. When he was a boy the city of Sepphoris, near his home, revolted against Rome. The invaders put down the revolt with bloody thoroughness, wiping the city off the face of the countryside. Its male inhabitants were crucified. Crosses were planted on hills outside the city until they looked like forests. In all probability Jesus saw those grisly crosses. What an impression such a sight must have made on an alert, sensitive boy! How well Jesus knew how Rome treated men considered subservient! The shadow of the cross fell across every day of his life. It was a factor confronting him in every vital decision. Should he remain a carpenter, or go forth to preach and heal? Should he use his fathomless powers for his profit, or to serve his people? Should he go to Jerusalem for the Passover, or seek the safety of the countryside? Should he wait at the Garden of Gethsemane for the Roman soldiers and the traitor's kiss, or flee into the cover of the night? How well he demonstrated his right to say, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." So Christ carried his cross toward Golgotha, and they nailed him upon it and lifted him to die against the sky. But on the third day he rose from the dead, and Easter was created from which mankind received its imperishable hope. The cross of Christ was an inescapable experience as he moved to the purpose for which he came to earth. So it was written of him, that "for the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame."

CAN WE FOLLOW CHRIST?

Almost I can hear the sceptic still demur. "It may be so for Christ, but not for me. The way I test life there is no joy in self-denial." The great Garibaldi would not agree with him.

What a vivid contrast we see between the superb way the Italians fought under Garibaldi, and the military record of the nation he founded! How could he make them such fighters? Listen to what he offered them.

> I am going out from Rome. Let those who wish to continue the war against the stranger come with me. I offer neither pay, nor quarters, nor provisions. I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battle and death. Let him who loves his country in his heart, and not with his lips only, follow me.

And follow him they did, through defeat, disaster, despair, and encompassing death, until their nation was free. He offered them a cross, and in that cross they found their glory.

Still the sceptic answers: "Ah, yes, but such does not apply to me. I am not the son of God, to take up a cross, nor a soldier of liberty to free my nation." *Does* this truth apply to us? *Can* you and I find joy in a cross? A mountain's summit may glisten in the sunlight, while its lower altitudes are covered with cloud. So this deal of joy through self-denial may shine radiantly clear in the life of Christ, and even of leaders like Garibaldi, while on our common levels it seems obscure and difficult of access.

SELF-DENIAL IS INEVITABLE

The difficulty, however, lies not in the principle, but in our understanding of it. We usually think of self-denial in a very mistaken way. We envisage a boy with a nickel wanting to buy an ice-cream cone. "Why should he deny himself an ice-cream cone?" we ask. The question, however, is whether he denies himself the ice-cream cone *or* the nickel.

Either way, he denies himself something. Self-denial is a sword that always cuts two ways. If you read one book, you do not read another. Play this game, and you deny yourself that chance to play another game. Choose this vacation spot, and you deny yourself another vacation spot. Develop this hobby, and you neglect another. Choose any pleasure, and you deny yourself another. Self-denial is as inescapable a part of living as breathing itself.

The impossibility of living without self-denial is illustrated by the fable of the mule who found himself exactly between two identical haystacks. Hungry, he could not choose one haystack for fear of missing the other. According to the fable, there he died, unable to enjoy one haystack for fear of denying himself the other. Self-denial is just that inevitable.

Our question is not *whether* we shall deny ourselves, but what. Our choice is not self-denial or freedom from self-denial, but the selection of the values we gain for our self-denial. Paul put it vividly, as he described the athletes' hope of securing the wreath placed upon the heads of winners in the athletic games of his day: "They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable." Our only choice is whether we deny ourself for joys that perish or persist.

THE CHRISTIAN HAS A GOAL

Let us watch this principle at work. The words "self-denial" are popularly used in relation to sexual morality with a sadly mistaken impression. In common usage, we say that the Christian of clean mind and body practices self-denial, while libertines do not deny themselves. In fact, however, the self-denial of the libertine is as real as that of the Christian. The only difference is that the end is tragedy for him, joy for the Christian. For the sake of vivid, short-lived pleasures he denies himself a Christian home. The Christian, for his part, denies himself temporary sensations for the greater pleasures of a home with its much deeper satisfaction. The libertine, with nothing to hold to but the faded memories of a tawdry past, denies himself infinitely more than the Christian in his self-control. "They do it for a perishable wreath, but we for an imperishable."

Many marriages are ruined by people who may abide by a required sexual code, nevertheless are spiritually unfaithful. Out of fear of denying themselves their own comfort, they deny themselves the deeper satisfaction of living in a happy home. A controlled temper, a decent demeanor no matter how one feels, a kindly attitude even under irritating circumstances—these are not easy. Carlyle did not master that much self-denial in his relationships with his wife. After her death, as he remembered his outbursts of temper, he mourned: "Ah! if I only had five minutes with her to assure her that I loved her through all that." He would not deny himself the satisfaction of an uncontrolled temper while she lived, so he denied himself the contentment of a clear conscience when she was dead. We must make

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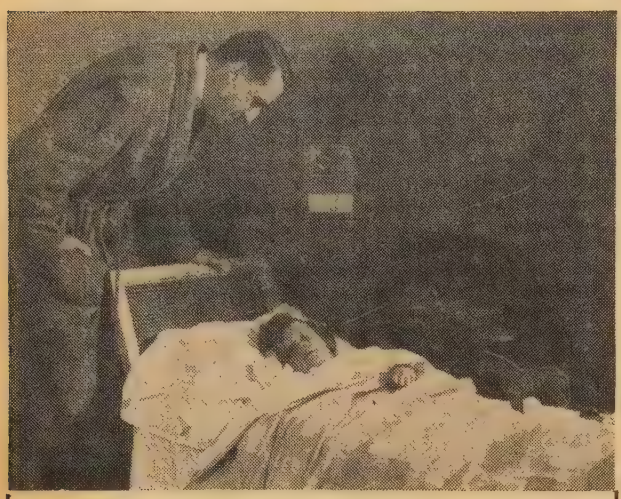

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the choice of self-denial in our homes—whether it is for pleasures perishable, or for a joy imperishable. So the Christian takes up the cross of self-control and triumphantly sings:

> Rejoice, ye pure in heart,
> Rejoice, give thanks and sing.
> Your glorious banner wave on high,
> The Cross of Christ your king.

Thus we begin more deeply to understand these words of Christ. The highest words of praise ever to fall from his lips had been given to Peter a moment before, as he said, "Thou art a rock, and upon thee will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Immediately after that:

> Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and then on the third day be raised. And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid, Lord. This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter,"Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men."

Jesus knew well that this council of comfort is of the devil himself. The fear of self-denial for a future joy is indeed a hindrance to every one of us.

Let's apply this principle of joy through self-denial where the shoe pinches tightest for most of us, in our giving for God's work. The satanic council of comfort is well known to all of us. Many of us, fearing that we might deny ourselves some comfort, give as little as possbile. Our real desire about money is not to give, but to get and keep. We want to make sure we can buy this comfort, afford this luxury, maintain this kind of appearance. So many give as little as they can, holding fast to the perishable things money will buy.

Indeed the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men. In the early twenties the Asbury Methodist Church of Scranton needed a new organ. A prosperous silk manufacturer in the congregation gave the instrument. As the installation proceeded, he became so interested in it that he discovered in the church a new field of permanent interest. Then came the depression. The silk manufacturing business collapsed. Today he is on the caretaker's staff of the church to which he once gave an organ costing $25,000. The story of his life he summarized in these words: "That which I kept, I lost. That which I gave, I have." Thus some keep all they can, for perishable pleasures; others give all they can, for an imperishable joy.

So Sir Wilfred Grenfell, battling mammoth odds, braving hardship, giving his life in love for the fisher folk of Labrador, declared that he disliked to speak of self-sacrifice, for he could not recall that he ever indulged in it. So Livingstone, passionately desiring the salvation of Africa, could write, "People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege." So it is written of the Master, "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross." Pray God it may be written of you.

God's Plan for Your Life

(Continued from page 13)

he underwent it. At the time when this article was written, he was in college studying to be an orthopedic surgeon! These parents were both kind and wise with their child. Although they could not and did not prevent polio from striking him down at five years of age, and, although they could not control many other harmful influences upon him during the course of the years, nevertheless they had a plan, a purpose and a great love for him.

This true story helps us to get our thinking straight about God's providence. The truly Christian conception of divine providence is not the thought of some kind of supernatural manipulation of all man's affairs. Rather it is the profound and wonderful truth of *the dynamic love, the dynamic fatherhood of God*. Even as the parents of this crippled boy had a plan which of necessity involved discipline and steadfast purpose and love, so God has a plan, a purpose, and love for us. And God has a particular life-plan for each one of us. He wants us to do something for him, and for our fellow men which only we can do. If we fail to do it the total fabric of God's great design is imperfect and incomplete to just that degree! Only to a limited degree can others —more faithful to him—make up for our failure. It is the awesome truth that "they without us should not be made perfect." But it is also true that each one of us, with God's help, is able to build his life according to the divine pattern. And when we do so, and persevere, we discover the true meaning and glory of our lives. In day to day experience, as well as in the growing grandeur of life itself as it unfolds, we discover for ourselves what the wise man of old meant when he said, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

FAITH CHANGES THINGS

Such belief in and first hand discovery of God's plan for our own lives, makes a tremendous difference. Living is not aimless, but daringly purposeful for good. And great things happen. Horace Bushnell struggled all his life against poor health but, believing that God had a plan for his life, he discovered it and made his life count. Helen Keller, although blind and deaf from infancy, discovered her great secret. "I like to think," she said, "that through my limitations God is working out some good purpose. My troubles have also been great adventures. They have brought me understanding, friendship, and taught me how to serve the world." Here, in words of Miss Keller, is the secret of true greatness and peace of mind.

The great tragedy in many lives is that there is often no real belief in any such divine providence. If and when such belief comes, the outlook on everything changes. We gain a different perspective and we place quite different values on things. We are no

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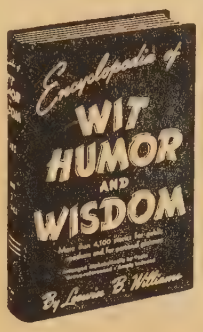

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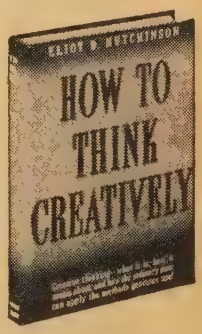

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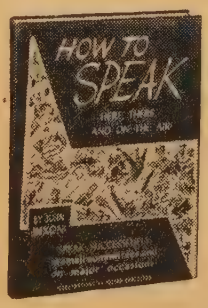

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longer so much concerned about what we have, as what we are becoming. We are no longer willing to sacrifice the things which matter most for the things which matter least! And our own lives are given a new dignity and worth. Discovering and fulfilling God's own plan for our lives, there can be no thought of suicide or even lesser forms of cowardly surrender. It was faith in God's plan revealed to him in Christ which nerved St. Paul for great living. He declared simply, "I know him in whom I have believed." "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Let me close with just a word to parents. The biggest thing in youth guidance is to say effectively: "God has a plan for your life—he really has—and there are ways you can discover that plan and do it." Christian parents must effectively teach their young people that the real secret of life lies in this discovery. Then, having told them, they must help them to understand by showing God's plan working out in their own lives. If that seems like a large and almost impossible responsibility for anyone to meet, let me say that the church stands ready to help.

The Message of the Bells

By THOMAS CURTIS CLARK

I looked upon the dreary waste
Of man's grim carnage, mankind's fear;
I judged all mortals in my haste—
The New Year bells rang sweet and clear.

I mourned earth's battles, new and old,
I doubted every dream of peace,
I sighed for mankind's greed for gold—
The bells of New Year would not cease.

I saw the poor and weak go down
Amid the battles of the strong;
I cursed the cruel, heartless town—
Again the bells burst into song.

They sang of peace, they sang of good will,
They sang of love that soon must reign.
I mocked their song, but could not still
The flooding rapture of their strain.

And thus the bells ring on and on
In countless hearts that bear the hope.
They hail the coming of the dawn,
Though now the nations darkly grope.

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The Qualities of a Good Hymn

By MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

IN TODAY'S hymnals there are some good hymns and others which are not so valuable. Our particular task in the following paragraphs is to set forth some principles by which it is possible to determine which hymns ought to be used, and which are better left unsung.

In the Protestant church of today the singing of hymns is an act of *corporate* worship. For that reason a good selection must have unifying power. This means that its concepts must be such as can be understood and appreciated by all the worshipers singing it. As they are used today, they intend to supply not individual strengthening but also to produce spiritual cohesion among the members of the congregation. For this reason many of our best hymns employ the plural of the personal pronoun in much the same way that the Lord's Prayer begins with "our" and not with "my."

"Abide with me" uses the singular pronoun, to be sure. Yet it blends our many "I's" into "we" by expressing truths and experiences which are common to all believers. Some other "I" hymns do not have this quality. They tend to atomize rather than to unify a group of worshipers; for they present only the unique spiritual adventures of some single and singular soul.

One of the greatest writers of English hymns was Isaac Watts, the bicentennial of whose birth many churches observed last November. Many of our very best hymns come from his pen. It is to be noted that most of his compositions employ the plural pronoun of the first person—over fifty-five per cent of them, if statistics are of any value. In most of the others, the personal pronoun of the singular is used primarily because the Scripture passage on which the individual hymn is based employs the singular pronoun. One of the reasons Isaac Watts is considered to be a great hymn writer is the fact that he understood this basic quality of good hymns.

● *Simplicity in Words and Music*

For the purpose of drawing the congregation together and into the presence of God it is necessary that the hymns we choose be simple. Simplicity, of course, must not be confused with simple-mindedness. We mean the clarity of great art, of poetry and music—the simplicity which does not leave out the most child-like worshiper in the congregation and includes in its experience and in its expression also the publican standing afar off.

A striking instance of such plainness is Isaac Watts' well-known "O God, our help in ages past." The music of the hymn could not possibly be more simple. What is more, the words are almost all monosyllabic. The "sufficient" of the second stanza is the most difficult term in the whole hymn; and that becomes clear in the light of the immediate context.

Incidentally, in this matter of hymns we must always consider both words and music. The two must be happily married, so to speak. There must be a high degree of compatibility between them. The music is intended to lend an air of infinity to the text of the hymn itself. The music is the helpmeet.

This presents difficulties occasionally because of the strophic nature of the hymn, each verse being repeated to the same tune. This makes a perfect musical interpretation almost impossible. We need only call attention to the tremendous contrast between stanzas of Watts' "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." The third and fourth stanzas depict our Lord's suffering on the cross. That description changes in verse five to one of the most inspiring statements of self-surrender in all of hymn literature. Yet both stanzas are sung to the same music.

M. H. SCHARLEMANN

Simplicity of words is also a striking feature of Charles Wesley's "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" although, in the case of this hymn, the tune *Martyn,* most commonly used, leaves much to be desired. Exactly 157 words of the 188 used in the hymn are words of one syllable. Only 31 are polysyllabic; and of these only the words "defenseless" and "unrighteousness" have more than two syllables each.

It is almost unnecessary to add in this connection the caution that the concepts used by the author of a hymn should be intelligible to the worshipers of today. When the third verse of "Sweet Hour of Prayer" speaks of "Mount Pisgah's lofty height," how many members of the congregation understand the allusion? And what is "the silver cord," many a person may rightly inquire, of which it is said, "Some day the silver cord will break, and I no more as now shall sing?" The only redeeming feature of this particular selection would seem to be that it gives promise of better music to come!

Of course, we must not push this principle too far. After all, it could be applied to such a degree as to eliminate much that is good and proper. What is more, men can still today be taught the significance of "Mount Pisgah." Most worshipers are capable of learning. It is not necessary, therefore, to go looking for the lowest common denominator in this instance. On the contrary, we can raise their fractions of knowledge and understanding by explanation and instruction.

● *Sincerity Is an Essential*

Is it necessary to say that a hymn ought to be a sincere expression of the worshipers taking part in a particular service? It is well to look over the words of all the stanzas in a hymn before selecting it for a service; for it may contain sentiments which the congregation may not at a particular moment be able to sing with sincerity. We have heard of congregations which were asked to sing "Holy Ghost with Light Divine" including the words "Bid my many woes depart, heal my wounded, bleeding heart," when they had just finished singing, "What a fellowship, what a joy divine" and were supposedly in a spiritually jolly mood. Then consider the absurdity of the lines in this same so-called hymn, "Long has sin, without control, held dominion o'er my soul" (stanza 2). This from the lips of a regular worshiper amounts to a denial of the efficacy of God's means of grace. The words could be sung sincerely, perhaps, only by one who had just hit the sawdust trail.

Obviously a hymn should be appropriate. There is a rumor floating through the Chaplain Corps, United States Army, to the effect that during World War II a chaplain invited his congregation of soldiers in Greenland to sing, "There's a church in the valley by the wildwood." Could anything be more out of place? One wonders by what process of reasoning, if any, this particular selection was made for men

stationed on the ice-floes of Greenland. If the chaplain's purpose was to induce a feeling of homesickness, someone should have reminded him before it was too late that nostalgia (except for the *heavenly* fatherland) is not an essential ingredient of worship. In this instance the chaplain's choice was not appropriate to the occasion.

In the choice of hymns some thought must be given, too, to the place of the hymn in the service. It would not be appropriate to sing, let us say, "Come, Thou, Almighty King" at the end of a service. An order of service is presumed to have order, which means that it is expected to follow a plan. Not all hymns fit anywhere in the service as it progresses. Those asking for pardon, as a case in point, are not properly sung after the assurance of forgiveness has just been proclaimed; for that would represent retrogression rather than progress in the worship service.

● *Reverence Must Not Be Overlooked*

Then, too, the hymns we choose for our services should be reverent in words and music. There is little room in worship for "corn" such as the" sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flow'rs" of the hymn which appears in some hymnals under the title "How Tedious and Tasteless." The same is true of the closing line of its first stanza: "But when I am happy in Him, December's as pleasant as May." Sometimes we have wondered out loud about the third stanza of "Sweet Hour of Prayer." Is there not a lack of reverence in the manner in which the great truth of life everlasting is expressed in the words, "This robe of flesh I'll drop (*sic!*), and rise to seize the everlasting prize, and shout (*sic*), while passing through the air, 'Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer.' "

The quality of reverence ought to be found not only in the words but in the music of a hymn. Many of our evening hymns have this element to a high degree. If there should be any doubt as to what reverence in music means, we might ask the organist to play Marv Lathbury's Chautauqua hymn, "Day is dying in the west."

Pronounced secular associations in the music of a hymn can disturb its reverence profoundly. Who of us can sing, "O happy day that fixed my choice," without entertaining some extremely secular thoughts associated with the Eighteenth Amendment. (Note well: This is not a criticism of the sentiment expressed by the hymn, only of the music suggested!)

A caution is in order here, perhaps; for if we were to eliminate all the hymns whose tunes had a secular origin, we would have to abandon even such a noble selection as "O sacred head, sore wounded," the melody of which, in a different tempo, was taken from a medieval love song, "My peace of heart is shattered." Perhaps, it is fortunate, too, that the source of Gottschalk's often used tune for "Holy Ghost, with light divine" is not generally known. This has made it possible for many persons to sing this hymn according to the music given with less scruples than he would otherwise have had.

Exaggerated emotions have no part in reverence; hence a hymn ought not to have a pronounced rhythm. Rhythm whips up the feelings. This is the first thing a child appreciates about music; for rhythm appeals to elemental feelings. Reverence, being a quality of quiet wonder, cannot long live on a heavy pulse. "The Old Rugged Cross," though it is a favorite of many people, is notably defective in this respect. Its rhythm detracts from that wonder and awe which one would expect in the presence of the cross; the music gets in the way of the words. It gets between the worshiper and his God, thus violating the primary premise that hymns are "vehicles of worship," a movement of the worshiper toward God—not in jig-time, but with bowed head!

Hymns ought to be beautiful, too; and that applies to both words and music. By this we do not mean to recommend art for art's sake in hymns. On the contrary, the beauty of which we speak is that of truth and goodness, of love and gratitude. To be sure, it is hard to argue about tastes; and yet there is almost universal recognition of beauty when it is present. Moreover, tastes can be improved.

Monotony of words is not a characteristic of beauty. "God will take care of you" is a noble truth; yet when those very words are sung four times in every stanza, they become monotonous. Monotony in the use of a rhythmic pattern violates the requirements of beauty. "Have Thine own way, Lord" is an admirable statement of self-surrender. However, when the music of each stanza consists of eight repetitions of the same pattern, the hymn tends to become monotonous. The same is true of the music for "Brightly beams our Father's mercy," which, of course, also suffers from poor wording.

Sometimes monotony develops from lack of variety in the harmony used. "What a friend we have in Jesus" is one case in point. The same chord is used eleven times in the first line of music; in the second line it occurs ten times; six times it is heard in the third; and ten times in the fourth line. This means that thirty-seven times, out of a possible sixty, the same chord is heard in each stanza. Compare that with the flowing melodies and changing harmonies of a choral like "O sacred head, sore wounded"!

Since the words of the hymn are its *sine qua non,* it follows that we ought to consider the content of our selections. It is said of Isaac Watts that at his best he deals "with the greatest themes of Christian experience, of 'ruin, redemption and regeneration.' " His good hymns are great because they have something to say. They are not inane and empty like "Into the woods my Master went."

Those of us who have stood at deathbeds have discovered that very often the hymn book is as great a source of Christian comfort as the Scriptures. This makes it all the more imperative that hymns have content, that they teach, that they wrestle with the fundamental problems of religion. Is it possible to satisfy hearts hungry for abiding truth with "I come to the garden alone"? What has that hymn to do with sin and grace, the staple items of our Christian faith?

These qualities were all taken into account in the statement concerning hymns endorsed by the Hymn Society of America when it accepted Carl Price's statement that a good hymn "should be simple and metrical in form, genuinely emotional, poetic and literary in style, spiritual in quality, and in its ideas so direct and so immediately apparent as to unify a congregation while singing it."

Sermon Illustrations

Life Can Be Changed

HIGH in the Rocky Mountains, ten thousand feet above the level of the sea, there are two mountain streams —very near to each other—and on about the same level. But this is what is so fascinating about them: one of them flows eastwardly, down over the rough rocks to the level plains of the mid-west, to join other streams and finally empty into the Mississippi River, whose waters flow into the Gulf of Mexico. The other stream flows westwardly over a level country for some distance and then descends the mountains to pass on into the great Columbia River which empties into the Pacific Ocean. What a vast difference between these streams at their final destinations, five thousand miles apart and with a big range of mountains between them! How easily the course of one of them could be changed near their source! How like

they are to human lives than can be channeled into any direction by the Spirit of God!—*From a sermon for youth by Charlie R. Harrison, Second Christian Church, Bloomington, Ill.*

Confidence In Self

A few days ago I was talking with a theater manager about the complexity of the machinery used in showing a film. He declared that it is a very intricate business but added: "Anyone can run these machines if he has confidence in himself. Without confidence, even a genius couldn't do it."—*Nelson H. Oldford, Federated Community Church, Elk Grove, Cal.*

Making Prayer Work

Two piously brought up children were on their way to school. They had been tardy twice that week already and had received a stern parental warning not to loiter by the way. Suddenly they noticed it was almost nine o'clock and they were still a long way from the school building. One said to the other: "Let's stop and pray. We'll ask God not to make us late again." "No," said the other, "let's run like sixty and say our prayers as we go."—*Suggested by James Robert Gray, Morningside Methodist Church, Pittsburgh, from Charles R. Brown's book,* Dreams Come True, *Macmillan.*

The Coming Science

The eminent scientist, Charles Steinmetz, was asked what line of research would see the greatest development during the next fifty years and this was his reply: "I think the greatest discoveries will be made along spiritual lines. Some day people will learn that material things do not bring happiness and are of little use in making men and women creative and powerful. Then the scientists of the world will turn their laboratories over to the study of God, prayer and the spiritual forces which as yet have hardly been scratched. When that day comes the world will see more advancement in one generation than it has in the last four." Here is an eminent scientist pointing to a new heaven and a new earth which is before us even now.—*J. Paul Faust, First Baptist Church, Ardmore, Pa.*

Inexorable Choices

In Bayard Taylor's epic poem, *Lars, a Pastoral of Norway,* Brita, a popular young girl, fancies herself in love with two young men, Lars of the hills and Per of the sea. Both are desperately in love with her. And since Brita is apparently unable to choose between them, the men engage in a duel and Per is slain. In anguish the girl falls upon the sailor's body and cries, "It is Per whom I love!" Doubtless her reaction would have been the same had it been Lars who was killed. Therein lies the supreme tragedy of the story.

Life is filled with choices where no decision can be made without renouncing something one may greatly cherish. We do not blunder into the good things of life. The existence of neighbors, friends, wholesome family life—even of character—presupposes a "cost" to each of us.—*H. Lee Jacobs, First Congregational Church, Fort Dodge, Iowa.*

Fear of God's Presence

When I was a little boy and my beloved father had gone away to the town meeting, his return at night was unbounded joy to me. But one day, instead of gently lifting the old-fashioned iron latch as I came in through the shed, I swung up the claw of a hammer to hook into it, and broke the frosty latch handle clean away. From that moment of wrongdoing I began to dread my father's return. When he came and I told him what I had done, he did not punish me, but all day long my sin had made me fear my father's presence. The comfort of God's presence depends on being at peace with his will. How dreadful, through disobedience, to dread the presence of him who is infinite love!—*Arthur Wentworth Hewitt in* The Bridge, *Abingdon-cokesbury Press.*

Saved by Saving Another

One of the first stories we remember was that of two travelers crossing the Russian Alps in very cold weather and finding by the wayside a partially frozen peasant. One of the travelers decided to help the unfortunate man, and managed to lift him into the sleigh. His companion refused to help because he was already uncomfortably cold. Before the journey ended there was a dead man in the sleigh—the traveler who refused to get out and help the unfortunate man. Both men had been freezing, but the sheer effort of helping someone had brought the blood coursing back through the veins of one, while he who sat still perished.—*Archer Wallace in The Classmate.*

Which Man Was Rich?

Out of the dim past there are two figures that emerge. Long ago there lived a king by the name of Croesus who is known proverbially as the richest man that ever lived. He was king of Lydia—and still, despite his wealth, he had a tragic life. Of his two sons, one was born dumb, the other slain. He had everything gold would buy, and still life was not worthwhile. When he died they piled all his possessions together and burned them and there was a stream of molten gold that trickled to the ground. Poor Croesus—he had riches, but nothing else.

There was another man who lived in the long ago. When he was old, he had scars on his body from much abuse—he was chained in a prison in Rome—poor and lonely and shivering—yet he could say: "I have all things and abound."—*Clifford Ansgar Nelson, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minn.*

Speaking Of Sermons—

The Eleventh Commandment

WE START the New Year off with a fine sermon by Lowell R. Ditzen of First Presbyterian Church, Utica, N. Y. It was sent to us for use in the New Year's edition of the Pulpit but came too late to be included. The thought it contains, however, is too good to omit so we bring it to you here. It is titled "The Eleventh Commandment," and it deals with the necessity of keeping a sense of values in our dealings with others. It was suggested by an experience which Dr. Ditzen had at Amsterdam and which he uses as an opening illustration. The author and others were in a "bull session" in the after-hours at the World Council and found themselves balked in attaining a meeting of minds by their opposing views on some of the fundamentals of theology. In a moment of silence, he says, an Australian, I think it was, spoke up and said, "Gentlemen, perhaps it is time that we remind ourselves of the eleventh commandment, 'Thou shalt not take thyself too seriously.' "

"Do we take ourselves too seriously?" Dr. Ditzen asks. He believes that we do. "One feels that there is a misplaced, unbalanced seriousness which causes kickbacks of petulence and self centeredness which thwarts effective living." He cites the general feeling of anxiety and restlessness by which our century is marked—our tendency to get mad at "the drop of a hat." "When we think the world is coming to an end because our candidate didn't win the election, aren't we taking ourselves too seriously?" he asks. "When we can't laugh, when we criticize more than we commend . . . we're taking ourselves too seriously." We must seek a balance of judgment to help us in easing the tensions under which we live.

First, "we ought to believe more in the kind of God revealed by Jesus Christ." Second, we must do the best we can to solve the problems that face us, then stop worrying. Third, we

must, by word and deed, "keep the natural affection of our hearts flowing to others." We must be consistent in this. Fourth, we must "recognize that we make progress slowly."

New Year's "is a time to rest on the oars and say whether or not I have done my best. Tomorrow, we'll bend to the task again . . . but today we will pause to be grateful, to rest and to learn wisdom." Now is the time to let the eleventh commandment take hold.

A sermon by Charles C. Knapp, associate minister of Yorkminster Baptist Church, Toronto, is based on the text, "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." Taking its title from the last five words of the text, this message starts with the declaration: "The spirit of man can light up the face of God as a candle lights up the face of him who holds it."

"Here is the ultimate argument for the existence of God, that men and women, limited in understanding, imperfect in achievement, nevertheless make of themselves windows into the being of God. Without such people belief in God would be immensely difficult."

"This is not strange, for we depend on the spirit of man to prove the truth and validity of a score of principles and activities of which we should otherwise be in doubt. Take prayer for example. The most persuasive, if not the final argument for prayer is the vision of some good man on his knees . . . when we see a man in prayer, his spirit burning out toward God as a candle, the mystery of it all seems to fall away." The same is true of faith.

Man Proves the Truth

Our lives, our personalities, are the ultimate demonstration of the goodness and love of God. And if this be true, how dependent God is upon man! How can it be otherwise? "Do we ever hear the voice of God without the voice of man? What other medium is there for the knowledge and the revelation of God than the spirit of men burning for him?"

"I sometimes wonder if, in our attempt to understand the mystery of God incarnate in Jesus Christ, we place the emphasis upon the deity to the neglect of the humanity. *God* became man, we say. Should we not say, God became *man?* It was in human form that the great illumination of God came to men, not in a spectre from another world, not in a demi-god, nor in an apparition from heaven. God was seen in one who, in the fullest and truest sense of the word, was man; bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, weak as we are weak, tempted as we are tempted."

The final word, then, is this: "whatever value your life and mine is to have, whatever true dignity will compass our steps, it will be to the degree to which our spirits have become the candles of the Lord."

Another sermon dealing with the problem of revelation comes from George H. Tolley of First Baptist Church, Jamestown, N. Y. Based on the text, Hebrews 1:1, it seeks to show "how you can receive messages from God." In the first place, we must listen as God speaks to us through his prophets and his Son. Yet, even though God gets through to us from the pages of the holiest of books, it is ridiculous to limit his ability to communicate with us to that one channel alone. He gets through to us by means of all his creation, all of life. He speaks through nature. "This, I suspect, is all the explanation needed for the frequent excursions of Jesus back into the hills of Galilee. He had found—or did he know it from the beginning—that God used the quiet and calm of the secluded places to get through to his only begotten Son." And he speaks to us even more meaningfully through men. "Let God get through," says this preacher. "Don't let yourselves become too hidebound, too stereotyped, too literal. In your quest for God's voice, bear in mind that God uses most unusual means to reach you. Keep your hearts open to receive him always and everywhere. He will not fail you."

Think what the tabloid press of today could make of the private lives of Abraham, Jacob or David! With this startling statement, Frederick A. Meyer of the Congregational Church of Rockville Center, New York, opens the subject "The Sins of the Saints" in a sermon well worth the attention of Pulpit readers, "And when we come to the New Testament," he adds, "how clear is the record of weakness in the lives of those whom we often call the saints." For examples he points to Peter's denial, the treachery of Ananias and Sapphira, the desertion of John Mark and others. And Paul, by his own admission considered himself *chief* of sinners.

Christ Is for Us

That the saints had sins, says Mr. Meyer, should help us understand that the Gospel of Christ is for needy men, not perfect ones—for sinful men, not righteous ones—for the sick, rather than for those who need no physician. And this means us and unless we realize that it does "we are worse sinners yet for we are guilty of a spiritual pride that is worse than any sin of the flesh."

But we must also realize the truth of what Paul said, and this is his text, "Christ Jesus came into the world *to save sinners* of whom I am the chief." The religion which Christ gave was no less exalted in its standards than was Judaism, but it revealed a God who reached down to lift up his sinful children. Therefore we can not use our admission of weakness as an excuse for our sin.

This is the hope of the gospel, then, that it does bring hope into our discouragement and enables us to believe that we may be better than we are or better than we could ever be by ourselves. God knows the worst there is to know about us and he still loves us. That is good news to every burdened soul. That gives us courage, when we are weary and discouraged. So may we "remember one who faced all evil in the world with no force but truth and no defense but trust in his heavenly Father. So may we know that our salvation is sure through him."

It seems to me that this is a message which is needed in our day. Men must be brought face to face with their moral responsibility—yet given hope that they can win out over the trials of our troubled time.

The Church Calendar

New Year's Sunday	January 2
Epiphany	January 6
Conversion of St. Paul	January 25
Race Relations Sunday	February 13
Ash Wednesday	March 2
First Sunday in Lent	March 6
Easter Day	April 17

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